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The Royal Society of London

PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS

Volume 58
1768

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JOHNSON REPRINT
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PHILOSOPHICAL
TRANSACTIONS,
GIVING SOME
ACCOUNT

OF THE
Present Undertakings, Studies, *and* Labours,
OF THE
INGENIOUS,
IN MANY
Confiderable Parts of the WORLD.

VOL. LVIII. For the Year 1768.

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THE Committee appointed by the *Royal Society* to direct the publication of the *Philosophical Transactions*, take this opportunity to acquaint the public, that it fully appears, as well from the council-books and journals of the Society, as from repeated declarations, which have been made in several former *Transactions*, that the printing of them was always, from time to time, the single act of the respective Secretaries, till the Forty-seventh Volume. And this information was thought the more necessary, not only as it has been the common opinion, that they were published by the authority, and under the direction, of the Society itself; but also, because several authors, both at home and abroad, have in their writings called them the *Transactions of the Royal Society*. Whereas in truth the Society, as a body, never did interest themselves any further in their publication, than by occasionally recommending the revival of them to some of their secretaries, when, from the particular circumstances of their affairs, the *Transactions* had happened for any length of time to be intermitted. And this seems principally to have been done with a view to satisfy the public, that their usual meetings were then continued for the improvement of knowledge, and benefit of mankind, the great ends of their first institution by the Royal Charters, and which they have ever since steadily pursued.

But the Society being of late years greatly enlarged, and their communications more numerous, it was thought advisable, that a Committee of their Members should be appointed to reconsider the papers read before them, and select out of them such, as they

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should judge most proper for publication in the future *Transactions*; which was accordingly done upon the 26th of March 1752. And the grounds of their choice are, and will continue to be, the importance or singularity of the subjects, or the advantageous manner of treating them; without pretending to answer for the certainty of the facts, or propriety of the reasonings, contained in the several papers so published, which must still rest on the credit or judgment of their respective authors.

It is likewise necessary on this occasion to remark, that it is an established rule of the Society, to which they will always adhere, never to give their opinion, as a body, upon any subject, either of nature or art, that comes before them. And therefore the thanks, which are frequently proposed from the chair, to be given to the authors of such papers, as are read at their accustomed meetings, or to the persons, through whose hands they receive them, are to be considered in no other light, than as a matter of civility, in return for the respect shewn to the Society by those communications. The like also is to be said with regard to the several projects, inventions, and curiosities of various kinds, which are often exhibited to the Society; the authors whereof, or those who exhibit them, frequently take the liberty to report, and even to certify in the public news-papers, that they have met with the highest applause and approbation. And therefore it is hoped, that no regard will hereafter be paid to such reports, and public notices; which in some instances have been too lightly credited, to the dishonour of the Society.

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